Access to medical facilities and supplies, trained doctors and midwives, changes in attitude and stigma, reaching people with the right information, evolved government policy, leveraged technological innovation – these are some of the most important factors in providing family planning and reproductive health services. But in the end, it all comes down to money, and on that front there was more challenging news emanating from Washington this week.

The Trump “global gag order” was extended far beyond previous Republican administrations to encompass all foreign assistance -- $8.8 billion – and will affect integrated health services around the world, including the fight against HIV/AIDS, Zika and “everything from measles malaria”. Unveiled during “Women’s Health Week”, the order will be felt most acutely in the quest to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, and according to many NGOs “women and children will die” as a direct result.

The upcoming 2017 London Summit on Family Planning will address some of the issues that the shortfall will exacerbate, always with an eye on the Sustainable Development Goal of universal access to sexual and reproductive health by 2030. The scope of the global problem can be seen in WHO statistics, which show “Pregnancy problems are leading global killer of females aged 15 to 19.”

Speaking of the WHO, this week marks the World Health Assembly in Geneva, with the body deliberating on the selection of a new director-general, as well as a wide range of other issues, including health emergency preparedness and drug safety.

Last week was Mother’s Day in many countries, and one article noted that fifty-nine percent of the women who choose abortion already have one or more children, so in addition to celebrating all that mothers do, it is also a day to think of mothers without choices — mothers for whom just one more birth could ruin their health, their ability to care for the children they already have and, potentially, their family’s financial viability.”

A few notes on technology: a “smart bangle” being introduced in South Asia “alerts pregnant women to toxic fumes and issues audio tips”; researchers are looking at plant chemicals to find new contraceptives; and an insight into how Even the Rainforest Is Better Off When Women Have Reproductive Healthcare.

The governments in Gambia and Namibia are prioritizing family planning. In Nigeria Nollywood star Jim Iyke is leading a campaign to reduce maternal mortality, and MTV is getting the word out in South Africa.

Finally, a shout-out to our University of Michigan School of Nursing colleague Jody Lori who was involved in the building of Zambia’s first maternity waiting home.
Complete News Review References:

General

This World Health Organization Leadership Election Is Crucial, And It’s Getting Ugly, Huffington Post, 19 May 2017

WHO: Director-General campaign closes amid anxiety and hope, The Lancet, 20 May 2017

Smart bangle delivers pregnancy tips to Asian wrists, Thomson Reuters Foundation, 19 May 2017

1 in 3 U.S. women have C-sections. How Chicago doctors are working to change that, Chicago Tribune, 19 May 2017

8 Things To Look For At The 70th World Health Assembly, Global Health Now, 18 May 2017

How a Trump order on abortion could hurt the fight against AIDS in Africa, Washington Post, 18 May 2017


Trump Unveils ‘Vicious’ Women’s Health Restrictions During ‘Women’s Health Week’, Rewire, 18 May 2017

Plans for major family planning summit take shape in Europe as US cuts back, Devex, 17 May 2017

Seeking medical abortions online is safe and effective, study finds, The Guardian, 17 May 2017

'Women and children will die' because of Donald Trump's global gag rule, charities claim, The Independent, 17 May 2017

Ouagadougou Partnership Donors to visit Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin, Digital Journal, 17 May 2017

In a first, moms in their 30s are having more babies than younger women, CBS News, 17 May 2017

Plant chemicals hope for ‘alternative contraceptives’, BBC, 16 May 2017

'Internet abortions' may be safe option where procedure is restricted, study suggests, Washington Post, 16 May 2017

It’s Official: ALL US Health Assistance–from Measles to Malaria– is caught up in US abortion politics, UN Dispatch, 16 May 2017

Pregnancy problems are leading global killer of females aged 15 to 19, The Guardian, 16 May 2017


Why include men and boys in the fight for gender equality?, Devex, 15 May 2017

Trump details anti-abortion ban over US global health aid, AP, 15 May 2017
Biostatistician has $1.4 million Gates Grant to study family planning worldwide, EurekAlert, 15 May 2017

Venezuela Health Minister sacked after revealing sharp rise in infant and maternal deaths, Curacao Chronicle, 15 May 2017

On Mother’s Day, considering the world’s mothers who can’t afford another birth, Denver Post, 14 May 2017

This Mother’s Day, moms share their abortion stories, UltraViolet, 14 May 2017

Abortion for health reasons backed by 75%, The Times, 14 May 2017

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Programme Launched in Southern Africa, IOM, 12 May 2017

Even the Rainforest Is Better Off When Women Have Reproductive Healthcare, Motherboard, 12 May 2017

The tools to thrive, FP2020, 12 May 2017

Your Biggest C-Section Risk May Be Your Hospital, Women’s Health, 12 May 2017


Collaboration Helps Broaden Access to Pfizer’s Contraceptive, Sayana® Press (medroxyprogesterone acetate), for Women in Some of the World’s Poorest Countries, Business Wire, 8 May 2017

The damage from Trump’s Global Gag Rule will be greater in this era of abortion rights, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 5 May 2017

Humanitarian crises are not temporary, nor are sexual and reproductive health needs, ECDPM, May 2017

Gender and fundamentalism: when religion muscles in on development, Open Democracy, 3 Apr 2017

Academic


Use of Reversible Contraceptive Methods Among U.S. Women with Physical or Sensory Disabilities, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 17 May 2017

Youth participation in HIV and sexual and reproductive health decision-making, policies, programmes: perspectives from the field, International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 15 May 2017

Gender equality and human rights approaches to female genital mutilation: a review of international human rights norms and standards, Reproductive Health, 12 May 2017

Timing of Family Planning Counseling Linked to Postpartum Contraceptive Use in Uttar Pradesh, India, Guttmacher, 12 May 2017

Unmasking inequalities: Sub-national maternal and child mortality data from two urban slums in Lagos, Nigeria tells the story, PLOS One, 10 May 2017

The Current Status of Research on the Integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV Services, Studies in Family Planning, 10 May 2017

Sexual and reproductive health information in Mulanje District, Malawi: Exploring perceptions of adolescent girls, their mothers and initiators, W Research Works, May 2017


Contribution of Contraceptive Discontinuation to Unintended Births in 36 Developing Countries, Studies in Family Planning, 11 April 2017

Youth Family Planning Policy Scorecard: Measuring Commitment to Effective Policy and Program Interventions, PRB, April 2017

Ethiopia

Government of Ethiopia using Global Burden of Disease evidence to achieve equity and access to health care for all, IHME, 15 May 2017

Gambia

SHE SHE SHE: LRR Principal Nursing Officer: ‘Family Planning reduces wife battering’, The Point, 18 May 2017

UNFPA launches Family Planning campaign in URR, LRR, The Point, 15 May 2017

Ghana

‘Avoid pre-marital sex and illegal abortions’, Ghana News Agency, 17 May 2017

Too early, too many, Ghana Web, 13 May 2017

Guinea

Santé: contribution à la réalisation des droits à la santé sexuelle et reproductive pour les femmes et les jeunes…, Animata, 12 May 2017

Kenya

Faza Hospital conducts first caesarean section, Daily Nation, 17 May 2017

Child planning and spacing beneficial, Daily Nation, 17 May 2017

Stop lying, child planning is beneficial to Kenyan families, The Standard, 17 May 2017

Time to get serious about maternal health, Daily Nation, 9 May 2017
Liberia

Zwedru Midwifery Training Program Graduates 43, Daily Observer, 19 May 2017

Namibia

Gawanas to receive IPPF award, Lela, 17 May 2017

Planned pregnancy could help eradicate poverty – Geingos, New Era, 15 May 2017

Govt’s priority is to improve maternal health, New Era, 15 May 2017

Report: Six babies die daily in Namibia, New Era, 15 May 2017

Safe motherhood campaign on, Namibian, 12 May 2017

Nigeria

Jim Iyke leads campaign to reduce maternal, child mortality, Guardian, 18 May 2017

Int’l Family Day: Association canvasses for timely release of health budget, Daily Trust, 15 May 2017

Nigeria’s dilapidated PHCs where torchlights are used for birth delivery, Premium Times, 14 May 2017

Nasarawa Assembly to enact law on family planning to tackle maternal mortality, Daily Trust, 14 May 2017

FG Committed to Attaining Zero Maternal Deaths, PM News, 13 May 2017

Charity opens resource centre for family planning, Daily Trust, 13 May 2017

UNICEF engages Kebbi journalists on child, maternal health, Nigerian Tribune, 13 May 2017

Rwanda

What we need to address the plight of midwives, New Times, 18 May 2017

South Africa

Having A Safe Abortion, MTV Shuga, 18 May 2017

Right of Reply: M&G/Bhekisisa response to the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition, Daily Maverick, 17 May 2017

Tanzania

Govt to produce anaesthesia experts to avert maternal mortality in the country, The Citizen, 15 May 2017

Pregnant schoolgirls for second chance, Daily News, 14 May 2017

Uganda

Budget cuts to affect adolescent reproductive health-youth activists, Daily Monitor, 18 May 2017

Fearless in Uganda, K4Health, 15 May 2017
Zambia

First Maternity Waiting Home Completed in Zambia, Merck for Mothers, 19 May 2017

MPs in public hearings and site visits to advance sexual reproductive health, Southern Times, 15 May 2017